

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An optical device, comprising:
 - a fixed reference;
 - a first optical module having a first optical component prealigned relative to a reference standard, the first optical module mounted to a first predetermined location on the fixed reference; and
 - a second optical module having second optical component prealigned relative to a reference standard, the second optical module mounted to a second predetermined location on the fixed reference;wherein the first and second optical modules are oriented relative to the reference standard and the first and second predetermined locations to optically interact with one another in a desired manner.
2. The optical device of claim 1 wherein the first and second optical modules carry reference features and the prealignment is with respect to the reference features.

3. The optical device of claims 1 or 2 wherein the fixed reference carries reference features at the first and second predetermined locations.

4. The optical device of claim 1 wherein the first optical module comprises:

a first prealignment mount; and
the first optical component is mounted in
the first prealignment mount.

5. The optical device of claim 4 wherein the second optical module comprises:

a second prealignment mount; and
the second optical component mounted in the
second prealignment mount.

6. The optical device of claim 4 wherein the first optical component is fixed at a prealigned orientation by the first prealignment mount.

7. The optical device of claim 6 wherein the first optical component can move with six degrees of freedom relative to reference features prior to being fixed to the first prealignment mount.

8. The optical device of claim 4 including a prealignment mount coupling adapted to fixedly couple the first optical component to the first prealignment mount at a prealigned orientation.

9. The optical device of claim 1 including a first fixed reference coupling to fixedly couple the first optical module to the fixed reference.

10. An optical device, comprising:
a fixed reference;
a first optical module comprising:
a first optical component;
a first prealignment mount;
a first fixed reference coupling which fixedly couples the prealignment mount to a predetermined location on the fixed reference;
a first prealignment mount coupling which fixedly couples the first optical component to the first prealignment mount at a prealigned orientation relative to the fixed reference coupling;
a second optical module comprising:
a second optical component;
a second prealignment mount;
a fixed reference coupling which fixedly couples the prealignment mount to a predetermined location on the fixed reference;
a second prealignment mount coupling which fixedly couples the second

wherein the first and second optical components are oriented to optically interact with one another in a desired manner.

12. The optical device of claims 10 or 11 wherein the fixed reference includes reference features at the first and second predetermined locations.

14. A method of manufacturing an optical device,
comprising:

obtaining a fixed reference;
obtaining a first prealigned optical module
having a first optical component
prealigned with a reference standard;

obtaining a second prealigned optical module
having a second optical component
prealigned with the reference standard;
and
fixedly mounting the first and second
optical modules at predetermined
locations on the fixed reference
wherein the first and second optical
devices are positioned to optically
interact with each other in a desired
manner due to their prealignment.

15. The method of claim 14 including placing the
first and second prealigned optical modules at
predetermined locations on the fixed reference prior to
fixedly mounting.

16. The method of claim 14 including prealigning
the first and second optical modules prior to fixedly
mounting.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein prealigning
the first and second optical modules comprises aligning
the modules in a reference frame defined by the
reference standard.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein prealigning comprises fixing the first and second optical components in prealignment mounts, respectively.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein prealigning includes compensating for optical variations in the optical components.

20. The method of claim 19 including:
obtaining a third prealigned optical module
having a third optical component
prealigned with the reference standard;
and
fixedly mounting the third prealigned
optical module at a predetermined
location on the fixed reference wherein
the third optical module is positioned
to optically interact in a desired
manner with at least one of the first
and second optical modules.

21. An optical device manufactured in accordance with claim 14.

22. Computer software configured to implement the method of claim 14.

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